1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

ter. During this time the food was being cooked, and the women were still chattering, though shut up in their huts. After eating, and when all the women were silent, the serious singing began.

Final mention should be made of the coincidence of an *elima* initiation and a *molimo* meeting, described by Anne Putnam. It is the custom of the *elima* to sing through the night, as do the boys of the initiation during the *nkumbi*. When the women once found themselves rivaled by some men singing the "hunting" *molimo*, they competed but were sung down and finally gave up. As soon as the sounds of the *molimo* trumpet died into the distance, however, the women started up again. When it was a case of death, and serious *molimo* singing, the women offered no competition.

It is told by these Mbuti that in the old days the *molimo* was an animal that belonged to the women, and all the men had to run away every time they saw it. But then the men caught the

[1] Subsequently I saw many more meetings of the *molimo* association (1960b, 1961) and its two different aspects were clarified and reconciled.

[P 227-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

173 534 825 562 171 177 534 [p.228-A]

animal and since then no woman has been allowed to see it.

Local villagers, who claim also to have the *molimo*, are critical of the occasional joking attitude of the Mbuti and say that they, the villagers, call it out only when someone important has died.

POLITICAL LIFE

Authority

622 888 [623]

Putnam goes further than Schebesta with regard to the existence or non-existence of chieftainship among the Mbuti. Primarily of the net hunters he writes, "... there are no chiefs, councils, or any other formal governing bodies in a pygmy camp" (Putnam, 1948, 334). There is respect, he says, for age and experience (*not* for "elders"); the opinions of the old and the wise are generally heeded. Any individual who shows disrespect for an old man, or who refuses to comply with any reasonable request, is abused by the others. Old men who are eccentrics are ignored.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 *
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

back to the forest and was never again to be allowed to see him or any of his family, but would be well cared for.

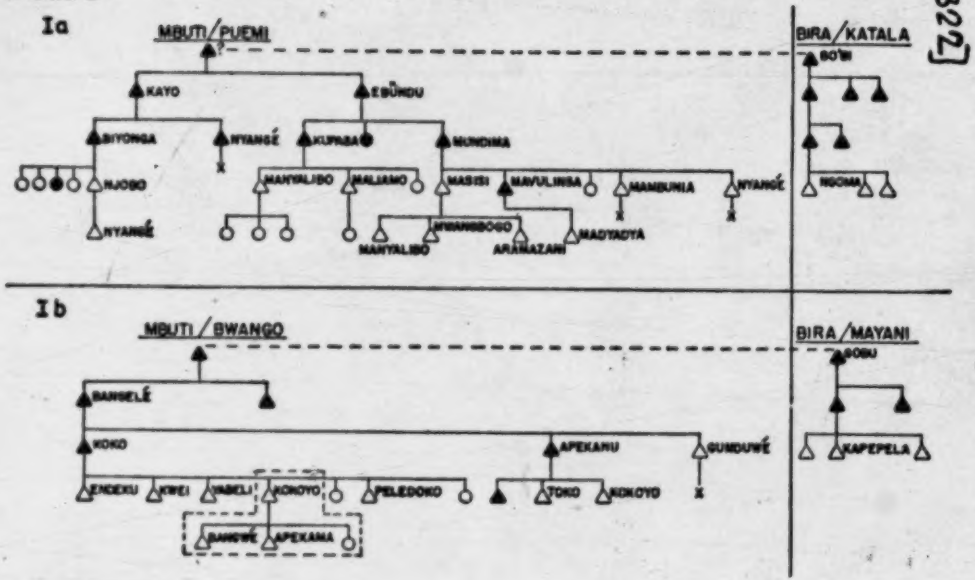
On attempting to find this Mbuti Chief, I discovered that he was in fact just an elderly hunter, and that the girl was his granddaughter. The local Mbuti denied any system of chieftainship, but said that they always appointed one person to deal with the villagers, as in this instance. Both they and the villagers claimed that the legitimate heirs to the chieftainship had to be born of either one of these two formal unions, and that in fact the Chief would sleep again with one or the other girl until she bore him at least two boys. They also said that obviously he would not sleep again with his sister (he himself seemed somewhat disgusted at the recollection of his first night as Chief), and so it would be his Mbuti wife who would provide the tribe with its heir.

There are also firstfruit offerings to the Mbuti in this area, and the same elements of respect and of economic unbalance extend right out of the forest into Ruanda and Burundi, even to the Twa in their relationship with the Tussi. For our present purposes, however, the two situations are not strictly comparable.

But however the villagers might rationalize the economic advantages that accrue to the Mbuti, they do not accept the situation entirely passively. They attempt to create some mechanism by which they can exert authority over the Mbuti and compel them to their service. It is quite evident that if the powerful tribal chiefs backed by armed police are unable to pursue the Mbuti in the forest (even the Belgian administration did not attempt to extend their authority this far), the lesser chiefs are going to be that much more incapable of asserting direct political control. Chiefs such as Kachui, Hamadi, Lupao and Nakubai did not even enter disputes concerning Mbuti in their tribunal records, preferring to deal with such cases "directly." I have witnessed a number of such cases, most of them involving alleged theft, or failure to reciprocate in the exchange of food. The Mbuti claim is invariably that the land is his (even when the charge is for theft of property, not of food), and the villager claim is, equally invariably, that the Mbuti are servants of the villagers, bound to them by indissoluble bonds of heredity and by the fact that the villagers "rescued" the Mbuti from the forest. To this the Mbuti may reply that they "dug" the villagers from a hole in the ground and taught them "how to see and smell and hear and talk." If the case involves food, each side claims original ownership of the plantain

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1
[P.322]
P 177* 608 511 175 C 171 608 511 563 173

TABLE I



Both Ngoma and Kapapela are renowned for their affection for "their" Mbuti.

TABLE 1a

Mbuti/Puemi: *All living members make regular prestations to Ngoma, their hereditary* kpara, *though he is permanently absent from the area. Njobo and Ngoma independently declared that Kayo's father allied with Ngoma's great-grandfather, Bo'bi. His offspring have been inherited by the senior member of Bo'bi's lineage since, and still recognize reciprocal obligations.*

TABLE 1b

Mbuti/Bwango: *All but Kokoyo and family, who hunt with the Epulu band, still hunt in the territory around Kapapela's village, moving, when he does, as a unit. They all claim to have been inherited from Gobu.*

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

had one of our most fruitful treks of all, learning many new and important things about the forest people.

The terrain was very different from that of Epulu, being mountainous and rocky, with jagged boulders sticking out of the ground at crazy angles as though some great city had once been swallowed by an earthquake. But even on the steepest escarpments, where the huge trees seemed to grow out of the very rocks, the Pygmies moved as quickly and surely and silently as elsewhere. For the first time I saw Kenge in difficulty, he being as unused to this kind of mountaineering as I was. But we were anxious to press inward as far as we could, and once again we found ourselves almost back at the Epulu; it lay about two days to the southwest at most.

While we were in this part of the forest we heard many stories of the old wars between the various tribes of villagers, as they invaded the forest, and how the Pygmies got caught between them so that they were forced to side with one group or another.

On leaving Nduye we continued southward, past the administrative center of Mambasa, and when we had crossed the Ituri, which at this higher point was, in Kenge's words, "a mere child," we once more left the car and began walking. At the end of a day, having passed through three deserted Pygmy villages, we were beginning to feel dubious at the wisdom of having come so far without a guide when we came to the banks of a large tributary of the Ituri. There, to our mutual surprise, was one of the legendary vine bridges, slung high up over the swirling waters, suspended by lianas fastened to the topmost branches of the trees on either bank. I was glad that Kenge was amazed, because there is every reason to believe that these bridges, contrary to the information supplied by romantically minded movie-makers, are not of Pygmy origin. To cross the bridge we climbed up a series of logs leading to a fork in the tree to which our end of the bridge was anchored, and from there we made our swaying way across. Kenge refused to look down, and when I stopped in the

Z 186 563 581 ever, a one-way process; no Negress could endure the pygmy way of living, and none of them ever marry pygmies.

P 581 The interplay between Negroes and pygmies may be illustrated by a number of examples in which they disagree on historical facts. The Negroes say that the pygmies once went naked, like animals. The pygmies hotly deny this, and assert that they always wore loin cloths. The Negroes admit that they themselves were once cannibals, but say that the pygmies ate more human flesh than they did. This too the pygmies deny; they claim that they never ate human flesh except when the Negroes gave it to them.

P Z 186 266 291 173

. . . .

Z 563 881 In addition to the exchange of food and, formerly, protection, which form the basis for Negro-pygmy interaction, there is another activity which helps to cement their relationship. The Negroes have a circumcision school, of the usual Negro variety. This school is held about once in four or five years. There is no specific interval; it is probable that they wait until there are enough boys ready to form a class of the right size. These boys are anywhere from nine to fourteen years of age. Now the pygmies associated with these Negroes may send their boys through this same school with the sons of their hosts. Thus, the pygmy boys are away from home several months, are in close association with the Negro boys, and are taught the same secrets that the Negro boys learn. At the end they are all circumcised together, and their parents come to the Negro village to dance and get drunk with the parents of the Negro boys.

P 177 881

Z P 561 The pygmies are thus age-graded like the Negroes. Each class has its own cheer, or song, as in American colleges. Each class also has its own name, such as "Hurricane" or "great army worm," depending on some event